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PULSED HUCLEAR RADIATION INDUCED TRANSIENTS IN ELECTRONIC PARTS AND MATERIALS (Godiva IV & V)

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PULSED NUCLEAR RADIATION INDUCED TRANSIENTS IN ELECTRONIC PARTS AND MATERIALS (GODIVA IV & V)

H. J. Degenhart W. Schlosser H.Bruemmer

DA Task No. 3A99-15-006-01

Abstract

Pulsed nuclear radiation induced changes in the electrical characteristics of electronic parts and materials obtained in two experiments at the Godiva II Reactor (Los Alamos) are described and discussed. The electronic parts investigated and monitored during exposure include coaxial cables, resistors, capacitors, rectifiers, and magnetic cores of various types, values, and materials. Most of the parts during exposure show transient parameter changes which exceed the tolerance values and then generally recover to their nominal values some time after completion of the radiation pulse. Some of the data show inconsistencies which prevent the authors from drawing definite and quantitative conclusions at the present time. In some cases, e.g., low and high value resistors. NiCr thinfilm resistors of various values, and ceramic capacitors, the data show certain repetitive patterns in the behavior of these parts which seem to permit a limited qualitative prediction of the responses of these components under similar environmental conditions. Experiments at Godivatype (pulsed) facilities are being continued.

U. S. ARMY ELECTRONICS RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY

FORT MONMOUTH, NEW JERSEY

CONTENTS

		Page
ABSTRACT		
INTRODUCTION		1
EXPERIMENTAL	PROCEDURE	1
Nuclear	Radiation Facility	1
Descrip	tion of Experimental Setup	1
1. 2. 3.	Calibration	1 2
PARTS TESTED	•	3
RESULTS AND	DTC/TROCTON	3
win cimown.	DISCOSSION	3
Cables,	Coarial	3
Compone	nt Parts	4
2. 3.	Resistors Capacitors Rectifiers, Silicon and Selenium Magnetic Cores, Ferrite	\$ 5 5 6
CONCLUSIONS		6
ACKNOWLEDCME	vis	6
REFERENCES		6
	TABLES	
I.	Parts List	8-14
	FIGURES	
1.	Instrumentation Setup (GODIVA)	15
23.	Formulae	16-19
440.	Observed Parameter Changes	20-56

PULSED NUCLEAR RADIATION INDUCED TRANSIENTS IN ELECTRONIC PARTS AND MATERIALS (Codiva IV & V)

INTRODUCTION

This report is one of a continuing series describing the results of experiments conducted by USAELRDL on the effects of high-dose and dose-rate pulsed nuclear radiation on electronic parts and materials. The experimental program has the objective of acquiring data on the effects of this type of radiation on electronic parts and materials to establish the mechanism of the changes, or damage, and to provide data for improving their radiation tolerance by developing either inherent radiation stability or applying compensation techniques.

The experiments which are the subject of this report were conducted at the Godiva II Facility, Los Alamos, New Mexico, during August 1959 and June 1960. The report is a complete presentation of all the data obtained during these two experiments, referred to as Godiva IV & V. No detailed interpretation has been attempted because of certain inconsistencies which are apparent in the results.

ENPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

Nuclear Radiation Facility

The radiation facility used in these experiments was the Godiva II Reactor located at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, Los Alamos, New Mexico.

This reactor is a bare critical uranium assembly enriched to approximately 90% in U-235; it is capable of delivering high-intensity pulses of neutron and gamma radiation. The average flux rate of leakage neutrons used for irradiation reaches 1017 n 'em2-sec near the core surface with integrated fluxes of 1013 n 'cm2. The generated gamma fluxes yield doses and dose rates of the order of 103 rads and 107 rads (sec. respectively. The radiation pulse width at half-height is approximately 80 μ sec. 1.2

Description of Experimental Setup

1. Instrumentation

The parts and materials selected for these experiments were instrumented and exposed to nuclear radiation pulses from the Godiva reactor and their performance characteristics were monitored during exposure. The individual parts were soldered on BNC coaxial connectors, or directly to coaxial cables, and potted with paraffin to prevent air ionization. The parts were then placed at determined distances from the reactor core from which cables led to the parameter measuring circuits. These circuits were located at a distance from the reactor where the radiation level was known to be low enough to preclude any transient effects in the measuring and recording instrumentation. All cable connections in the vicinity of the reactor were packed with silicone grease as a precaution to prevent air ionization in the cable junctions. The measuring circuits, schematically shown on each graph, were designed to provide output voltage pulses which could be related by a suitable calibration to a change in the electrical parameter (R. I. C., etc.) of the part under exposure.

The transient voltage outputs of the measuring circuits were amplified when necessary for display on cathode-ray oscilloscopes, which were operated in the single sweep mode, and prior to the initiation of the radiation pulse triggered with signals provided by the reactor facility. The oscilloscope traces were recorded by photographic means (Polaroid camera).

Figure 1 shows schematically the instrumentation setup for the experiments conducted at the Godiva reactor; the setup incorporates the measuring or detecting circuitry, amplifiers, oscilloscopes, and cameras described above.

The parts tested were mounted on an exposure stand and connected through 30 ft of coaxial cable to the measuring instrumentation. The amplifier circuitry consisted of two separate sections to provide amplification and matching for the quarter-mile length of coaxial cable between the Kiva, in which the reactor was located, and the reactor control room, in which the recording instrumentation was assembled.

2. Calibration

The dc measuring or detecting circuits used in the experiments are schematically shown in Fig. 2 a through c with the formulas from which the plotted values were computed.

The ac circuits used for measuring capacitance and inductance were calibrated prior to the experiments and are shown in Fig. 2 d and e. The calibration procedure for the capacitance circuit consisted of making measurements with the test circuit using a variable capacitor in place of the test sample C and noting the change in the LC circuit voltage as a function of change in capacitance (a typical calibration curve with $E_{\rm c}$ normalized is shown in Fig. 3 a. Thus, any change in the voltage swing of the LC circuit due to the irradiation of the capacitor C can be translated by means of the calibration curve into an equivalent capacitance change. The magnitude and duration of the transient effect are measured from the modulation envelope.

The test circuit for measuring changes in inductance is similar to that for the capacitance measurement described above. The change of inductance is measured as an amplitude modulation of the voltage $E_{\rm L}$ from which the magnitude and the duration of the transient changes are determined.

Calibration of the test circuit is accomplished using a variable air capacitor and noting the change in the LC circuit voltage as a function of capacitance C. The equivalent inductance is calculated as

$$\Gamma = \frac{C_{i}}{\Gamma^{o} \cdot C}$$

where

L = inductance for a particular value of E_L

L = inductance of the core under test

C' = capacitance of the connecting cable and circuitry.

(Figure 3 b shows a typical calibration curve with normalized E_L). Thus, any change in the amplitude of E_L due to irradiation of the inductor may be translated by means of the calibration curve into an equivalent inductance change.

To avoid ambiguity in measuring capacitance or inductance, the LC product is chosen either less than or greater than but not equal to $1/(2\pi f)^2$. Thus, for LC < $1/(2\pi f)^2$, an increase in C or L appears first as an increase in the LC voltage; for LC > $1/(2\pi f)^2$, an increase in C or L causes a decrease in this voltage amplitude.

3. Dosimetry

Sulfur pellets were placed adjacent to the parts during exposure to determine the total fast neutron (E > 2.5 MeV) doses of each nuclear pulse (see Table I parts List). For doserate measurements, the output of a SEMIRAD (Secondary Electron-Mixed-Radiation Detector) was recorded for each burst.

In this report, dose and dose rate were used equivalently because of the assumed equal duration and height of the single radiation pulses.

PARTS TESTED

A large variety of passive electronic parts were exposed in the two Godiva experiments: Godiva IV during August 1959, and Godiva V during June 1960. Included were: Cables RG-62 and RG-63, both with a semisolid dielectric (polyethylene and air), various types of resistors ranging from 100 ohms to 1 megohm with different power ratings, micromodule thin-film resistors, capacitors of ceramic and tantalum types, silicon and selenium rectifiers, and magnetic ferrite cores. The parts were tested under varied conditions of applied voltage, circuitry, total dose or dose rate, repeated exposure, etc. A detailed listing of the parts is presented in Table I.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results of the dc leakage current and capacitance measurements on coaxial cables are shown in Fig. 4-9. For the leakage current measurements on RG-62 cable, the samples were mounted with their paraffin potted or unpotted ends directed towards the reactor: the measurement on the RG-63 cable was made on a sample with its center portion coiled in a one-turn, 6"-diameter loop placed at the reactor. The capacitance measurement was made on a loop of cable also: this sample consisted of an 80' length of cable with its center coiled in a two-turn, 6"-diameter loop placed at the reactor.

Cables, Coaxial

Figures 4 and 5 represent the transient leakage current (recorded Δv is converted to leakage current $\Delta i)$ observed in a potted RG-62 cable sample, connected to the measuring circuit in which the measuring resistor was varied from shot to shot as indicated. Cables connected to low-impedance circuits (R_L = 10 or 100 ohms) showed leakage currents of the order of 10 masswinging from one polarity to the other. The same sample measured with higher impedance circuits (R_L = 1 kohm to 1 megohm displayed decreasing swing and currents of the order of only 10 to 100 μa .

In Figure 6, the voltage dependence of peak current is shown for unpotted cables. The load resistor was kept constant at 10 kohm and the applied voltage varied in steps from +6 v to +90 v. Unidirectional deflections were observed with peak currents ranging from +30 to +300 μ a; except in one case, with an applied voltage of +6 v, the peak current was $-200 \,\mu$ a.

A comparison of effects in potted and unpotted cables (Fig. 7) for which the applied voltage and the load resistor were kept constant at +45 v and 10 kohm, respectively, supports the assumption that when irradiated with identical doses, unpotted terminals show higher currents because of lower "shunt resistance" caused by air ionization (compare curve 2 with curve 4, Fig. 7). (The transient leakage currents—by whatever mechanism they are caused—can be accounted for by the insertion of transient "shunt resistance" calculated as in Fig. 2c). Dose or dose-rate dependency is also seen qualitatively (curves 1, 2, 5, 6, Fig. 7). Leakage currents range from 20 to 200 μ a in both potted and unpotted cables. A curve for leakage current (70 μ a) in RG-63 and an overall capacitance change (+15%) in RG-62 are shown in Fig. 8 and 9. In the capacitance measurement, the pronounced change of capacitance followed closely the shape of the burst, and recovery was complete within 1000 μ sec.

As a very general conclusion, it may be said that transient effects in cables indicate dependence upon dose rate (or dose), applied voltage and polarity, impedance of measuring circuit, potting, and perhaps other parameters. One of such parameters which may play a significant role in the shape, magnitude, and duration of the transient effect is repeated exposure. Because of the multitude of the parameters whose introduction is not yet understood and the very limited number of data obtained to date, no quantitative relationships can be derived, let alone any interpretation of the physical mechanisms involved.

Component Parts

The conversion of the oscilloscope recorded voltage changes Δv to the plotted component characteristics was obtained by using the appropriate formula given in Fig. 2. It is realized that this evaluation procedure ignores completely the fact that the observed Δv is a result of the superposition of the transient leakage current (or shunt resistance occurring simultaneously in the cable connecting the part to the measuring circuit) and the transient effect in the component proper. However, this procedure has been followed because in the absence of any quantitative and reproductive determination of the cable behavior, the transient cable effect cannot be subtracted. Increfore, at present, the component, plus the cable connecting it to the measuring instrumentation, must be considered as one entity until the effect in the component and the one in the connecting medium can be separated.

The following evaluation of the results is presented in the light of the foregoing explanation.

1. Resistors

a. Standard Type

Resistors of wire wound, carbon film, metal film carbon composition, and tin oxide film types were tested. Their resistance ranged from 100 ohm to 1 megohm. The data for these resistors are grouped according to the nominal resistor value rather than the composition. It must be noted that the 100-ohm resistors were measured in the so-called "forward voltage drop" (fvd) circuit (normally used for the measurement of the fvd in rectifiers, see below) with only 3 v to 6 v applied in order to keep the current drain low; whereas, all other resistors were measured with bridge circuits with 22.5 v to 45 v applied. In all cases, RG-62 cable was used to connect the part to the measuring circuitry.

The 100-ohm resistors showed transient resistance increases of the order of 20% (Fig. 10-12).

In 1-kohm and 10-kohm resistors (Fig. 13-20) resistance changes ranging from -5% to +5% were observed.

100-, 237-, and 346-kohm resistors (Fig. 21-24) measured in equal-arm bridges had transient relative resistance changes unidirectional and/or bidirectional) from about -30% to $\pm 10\%$...

The 1-megohm resistors wired in parallel to represent a 100-kohm resistor and measured in a 100-kohm equal-arm bridge showed a transient increase in R of 5% consistently in three successive exposures (Fig. 25). Figure 26 presents data on 1-megohm resistors obtained with the nonequal arm bridge (to reduce output impedance to amplifier) as indicated on the graph. The major effect is a 20% to 60% decrease with subsequent "overshoot" (up to 10%) and apparently slower recovery (> 2 msec) than all other resistors which recovered within 1-2 msec to their initial value.

b. Micromodule Resistors

Figure 27 shows the results obtained on NiCr thin-film resistors that were prepared by vacum deposition on micromodule alumina wafers at USAELRDL. The bridges were approximately equal-arm and exact balance was achieved shortly before the irradiation burst by adjusting the potentiometer, as indicated in the drawing, for balance. Under irradiation, these resistors showed a consistent behavior regardless of their nominal value, namely, for all of them, the resistance increased between 10% and 20% followed by a complete recovery within 1 msec.

c. Sensistors

The only type tested, a 100-ohm sensistor, showed the same behavior as a normal resistor of the same value (Fig. 10).

No permanent damage could be noted for any resistor.

2. Capacitors

Leakage current measurements were made on low-value (0.003 μ f, 0.01 μ f) ceramic and high-value (33 μ f, 60 μ f) tantalum capacitors; the latter were of the foil, slug, and solid types.

The ceramic capacitors showed an inverse or "negative" leakage current, which seems to depend on the value of the irradiated part and the total dose or dose rate (Fig. 28). Figure 35 shows capacitance change as measured in the two ceramic capacitor types.

The tantalum capacitors (Fig. 29-34) displayed a somewhat inconsistent behavior. While the majority of the capacitor types also exhibited a negative leakage current, some of them showed only true leakage (positive plotted current). In general, the magnitude of the effects varied from type to type. It is not yet possible to correlate these phenomena either with the value or with the composition of the capacitor. One of the reasons for the erratic behavior may be that not all of the capacitors were formed at the appropriate working voltage prior to exposure, but this could not be determined positively. Contrary to the immediate recovery observed in all other components studied so far, recovery in the tantalum capacitors can take from 50 msec to a few seconds, with the lingering part of the transient in its "plateaulike" shape resembling very closely the trailing edge of the fission pulse itself (Fig. 31).5

3. Rectifiers, Silicon and Selenium (Fig. 36 and 37)

The transient changes in forward voltage drop ($R_f \sim 1-2$ kohm) and reverse current in some Silicon and Selenium rectifiers were examined under pulsed nuclear radiation. While the forward voltage drop in the unpotted Silicon diodes showed high increases (30%), the

Silicon and Selenium diodes, if potted, showed only a small increase with a subsequent decrease. Recovery was complete within about 10 msec.6

The reverse current (about 100 μ a) observed in the Silicon diodes was much higher than in the Selenium diodes (25 μ a), and in both cases lasted no longer than 1-2 msec (Fig. 38 and 39).

4. Magnetic Cores, Ferrite

The inductance of a number of wound cores of MnZn and NiZn ferrite materials was monitored during irradiation. Using the circuits shown on the graph (Fig. 40), changes in the inductance (-25% to +15%) were observed. There appears to be no obvious connections between composition and radiation sensitivity; however, the cores with the lowest initial permeability were found to undergo the smallest change. Unlike the transients observed for other passive parts, the time required for recovery of the inductance transients is essentially the duration of the radiation pulse (prompt critical spike).

CONCLUSIONS

This report represents a complete summary of the data obtained on components exposed in two experiments at the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory Godiva II pulsed reactor.

The most pronounced and, at present, unpredictable effects are seen in cables and, when used as an interconnecting or transmission medium, will obviously influence the observations of component effects. An extensive program of cable effect studies considering the many possible contributing parameters has been devised. Future experiments should shed more light on the causes of the transient cable behavior. There are too many unknown variables, or as yet unmeasured parameters, and certain instrumentation and measuring difficulties to permit any quantitative or definite conclusion as regards the nature and mechanism of the true component effect at the present time.

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TABLE I

Legend for Part List and Graphs:

THD Total neutron dose (neutrons /cm²)

c.f. carbon film

m.f. metal film

e.c. carbon composition

t.o. tin oxide

w.w. wire wound

th. f. thin film

PE polyethylene

Whenever blanks appear on part list or graphs the data were not available.

Asteriaks on the graphs mark repeated exposures (compare part list).

Leakage current has been arbitrarily designated as positive for a positive $\Delta_{\mbox{ V}}.$

TABLE I (Continued)

Curve #	Godiva #	Part Description Gable	Type or Value RG - 62	Material FS & Air	Applied Voltage 45 V	Shot #	130 x 10 ¹² E>4 kev 7.1	Remarks blank, potted
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	>				6 4 4 5 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8 8	a no that	0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0 0.0	blank, unpotted blank, unpotted blank, unpotted blank, unpotted blank, potted blank, unpotted
	A				44444 666666 444466	のよのようてき	4,04,0,00,0 0,00,04,0	blank, potted blank, potted blank, umpotted blank, umpotted blank, potted blank, umpotted Augliflers prob
	> >	E E	NG - 63	* *	45 V 670 km	ળ મં	5.9	loop, potted
	ħ	Sensistor "	100 n, 1/84 100 n, 1/84 100 n, 1/84	doped single crystal,	*** 999	409	7.48 8.00	

TABLE I (Continued)

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Remarks	2. exp.		on cable	on cable	2. exp.		
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Type or Value	1000,1/84 1000,1/44 1000,1/44 1000,1/44	W 01,0 001	1 k 0, 1/10 W 1 k 0, 1/2 W 1.1 k 0, 1/8W	1 kg,1/20 W 1 kg,1/20 W 1 kg,1/20 W	1 kn, 10 W 1 kn, 1/2 W 1.2kn, 1 W 1 kn, 1/2 W 1.2kn, 1 W	4444 GGGG	
Part Description	Resistor " "	5 5	* : : :				
Godiva #	>	>	>		>	ħ	ž.
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tinued)	Applied Voltage	4444 4444 4444	444 222 444 444	22.5 V 45.5 V 45.0 V	455 V 757 V 757 V	4444 2224 4444 4444
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	Part Description	Resistor """		***:	F E E	FFFFF
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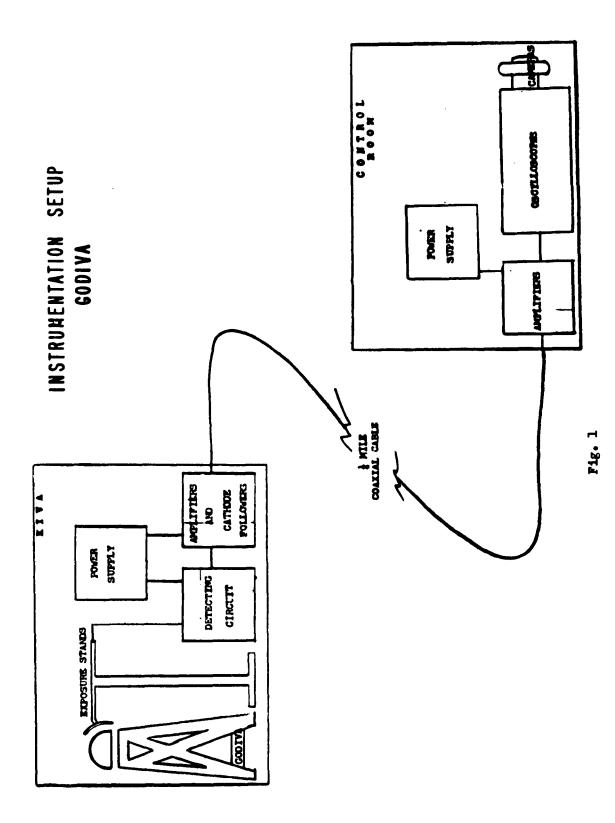
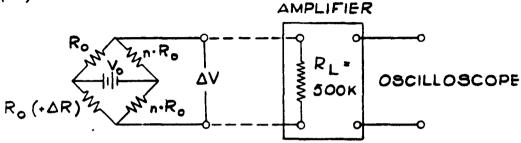


FIGURE 2 DC MEASURING CIRCUITS

(a) BRIDGE



If RL > nR. , THEN THE BRIDGE OUTPUT AV IS (ALSO SEE REF. 3)

$$\frac{\Delta V}{V_0} = \left[\frac{n}{1+n} - \frac{n}{n \cdot (1 + \frac{\Delta H}{R_0})} \right] \tag{1}$$

SETTING:
$$\frac{\Delta R}{R_o} = P_i \cdot g \frac{\Delta V}{V_o} = V$$

$$Y = \frac{n}{1+n} \left[\frac{\rho}{(1+n)+\rho} \right] \qquad (2)$$

WHICH MAY BE EXPANDED IN SERIES FOR SMALL P: (3)

$$\nabla = \rho \frac{n}{(1+n)^2} \left[1 - \frac{\rho}{1+n} + \dots + (-1)^{r-1} \left(\frac{\rho}{1+n} \right)^{r-1} \right]$$
 (3)

$$\rho = \nu \frac{(l+n)^2}{n - \nu (l+n)} \tag{4}$$

WHICH AGAIN FOR SMALL (OBSERVED) TO MAY BE EXPANDED IN A SERIES (5) IN ORDER TO OBTAIN FIRST (OR ANY ORDER) APPROXIMATIONS FOR P THAT ARE EASIER TO CALCULATE AND ESTIMATE THAN BY THE USE OF (4)

$$P = v \qquad \frac{(1+n)^2}{n} \left[1 + v \left(\frac{1+n}{n} \right) + \dots \right], \tag{5}$$

FOR EQUAL ARM BRIDGE (n=1) ALL FORMULAS OF COURSE SIMPLIFY:

$$P = \frac{4}{\frac{1}{2}-2}$$
 (4a), etc.

AGAIN ASSUMING R; > Ro THE RELATIVE CHANGE, $\frac{\Delta V}{V_0}$, OF THE FVd, V_F, DUE TO A CHANGE ΔR IN Ro IS:

$$\frac{\Delta V}{V_0} = \frac{V_f + \Delta V}{V_0} - \frac{V_f}{V_0} = \frac{R_0 + \Delta R}{R_0 + \Delta R + R_L} - \frac{R_0}{R_0 + R_L} \cdot (I^{\dagger})$$

SUBSTITUTING $R_L = n R_0$; $\frac{\Delta V}{V_0} = V$; $\frac{\Delta R}{R_0} = P$

WE HAVE
$$V = \left(\frac{1+\rho}{n+(1+\rho)} - \frac{1}{n+1}\right) = \left(\frac{n}{1+n} - \frac{n}{n+(1+\rho)}\right) = \frac{n}{1+n} \left[\frac{\rho}{(1+n)+\rho}\right](2)$$

which of course is identical to the Bridge with the same expansions and solutions for ψ and ρ as in 2 σ . Consequently, in first approximation, ie, $\Delta R \ll R_0$, we have in Both cases:

$$\rho = v \frac{(n+1)^2}{n}$$

WHICH FOR INSTANCE YIELDS :

$$\rho = \frac{\Delta V}{10}$$

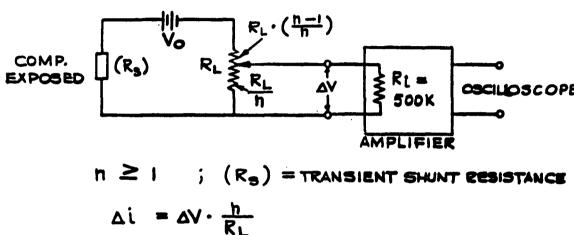
FOR R = I AND Vo = 40V (IN AN EQUAL ARM BRIDGE);

$$\rho = \frac{6}{5} \Delta V$$

FOR TL = 5 AND Vo = 6V (IN A FVd CIRCUIT).

FIG. 2 (CONT)

(C) LEAKAGE OR REVERSE CURRENT



$$\Delta i = \Delta V \cdot \frac{h}{R_L}$$

$$R_5 = R_L \left(\frac{V_0}{\Delta V \cdot h} - 1 \right)$$

FOR h=1 AND
$$\Delta V \ll V_0$$
 WE APPROXIMATE:
$$R_S \approx R_L \cdot \frac{V_0}{\Delta V}$$

FIGURE 2 (CONT.) MEASURING CIRCUITS (AC)

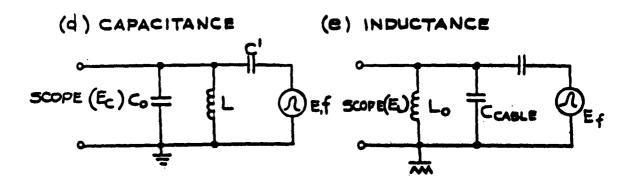
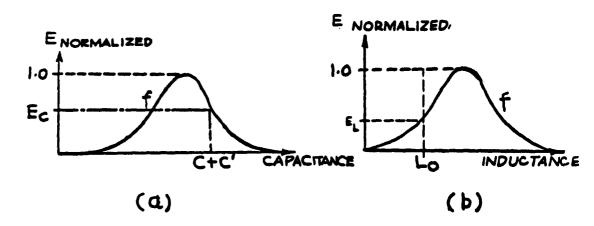
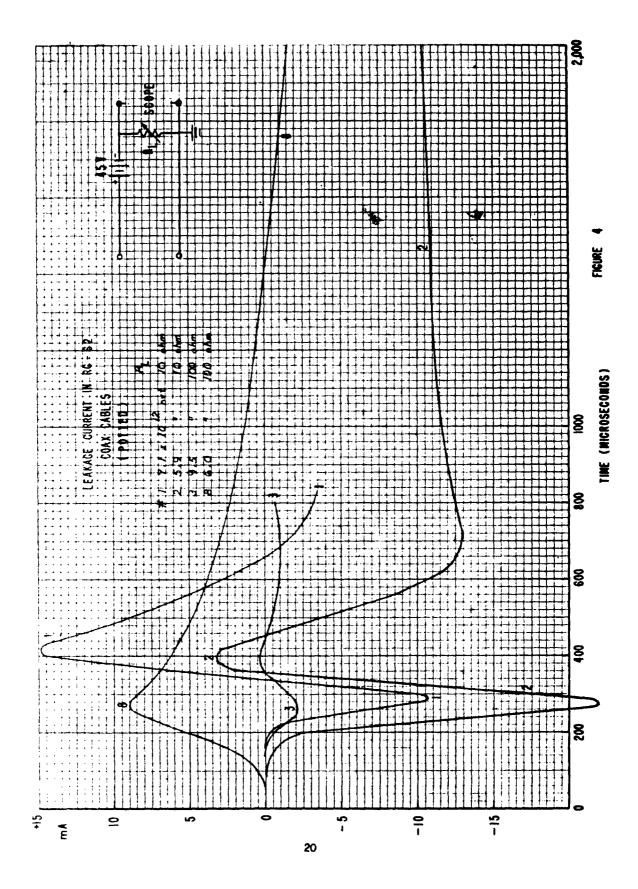
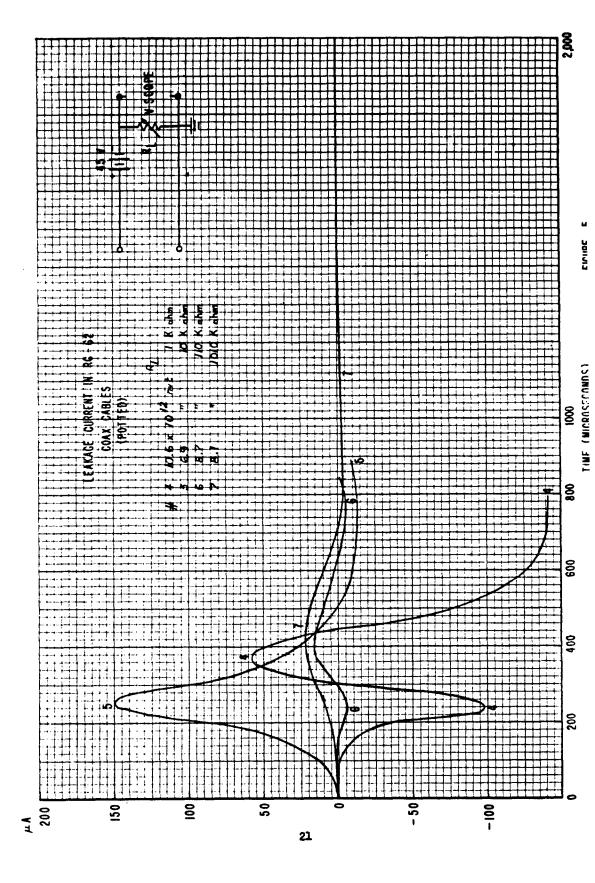
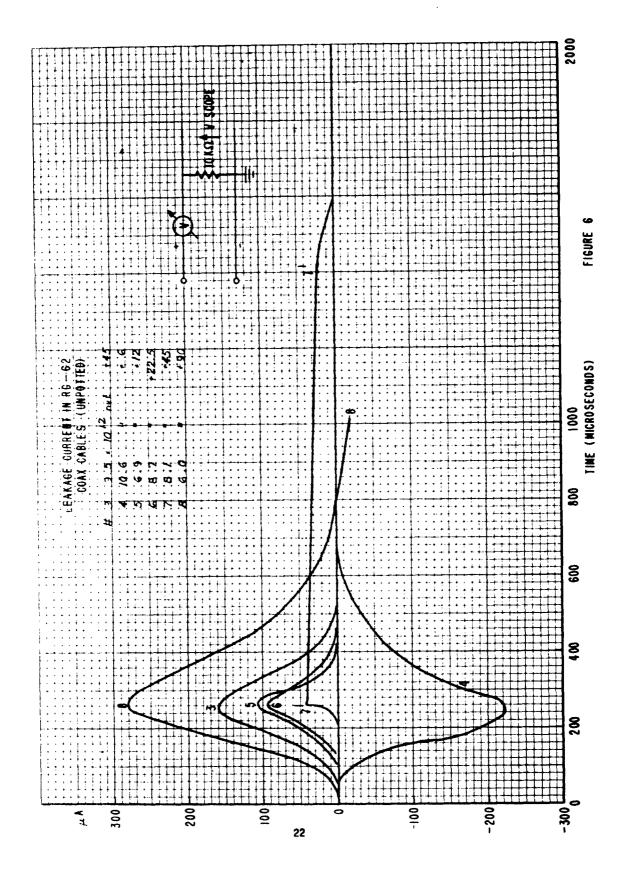


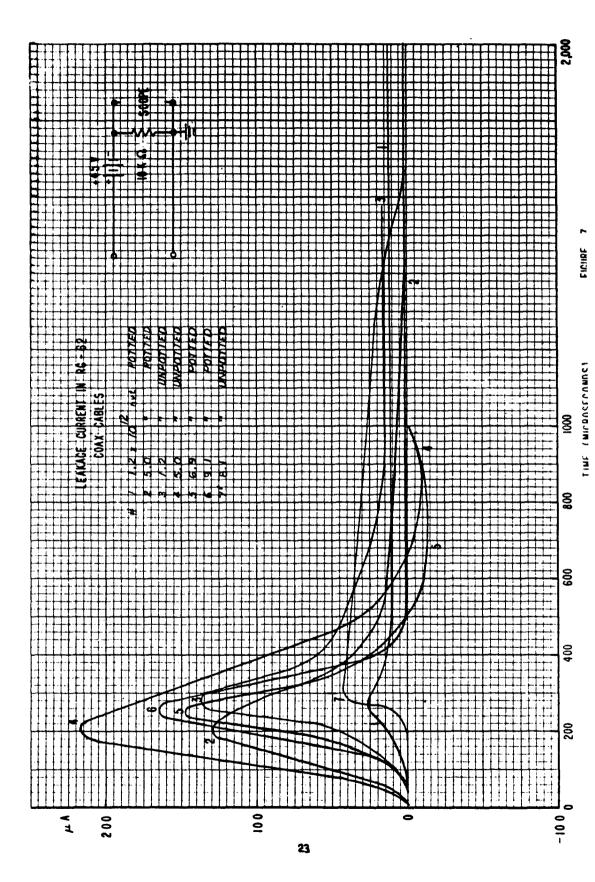
FIGURE 3

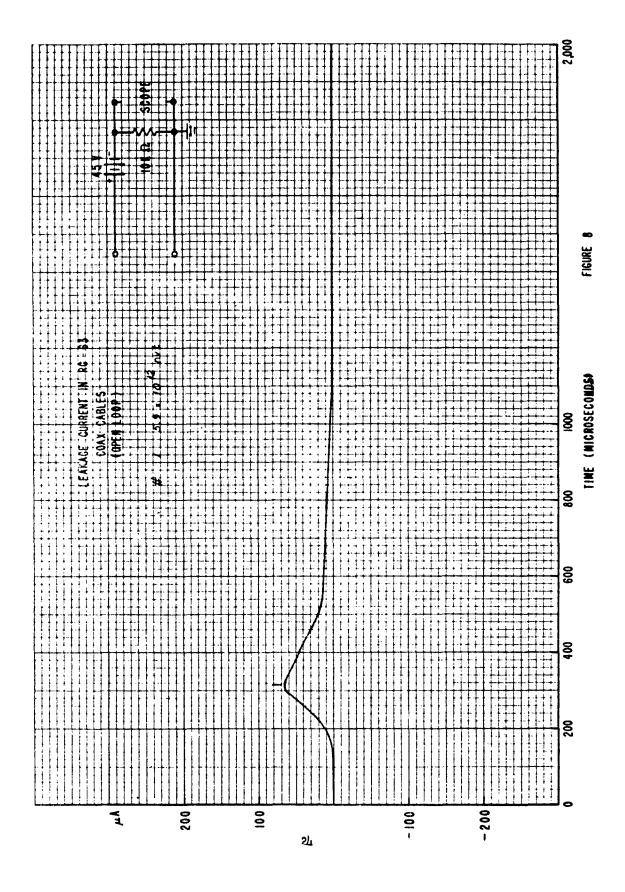


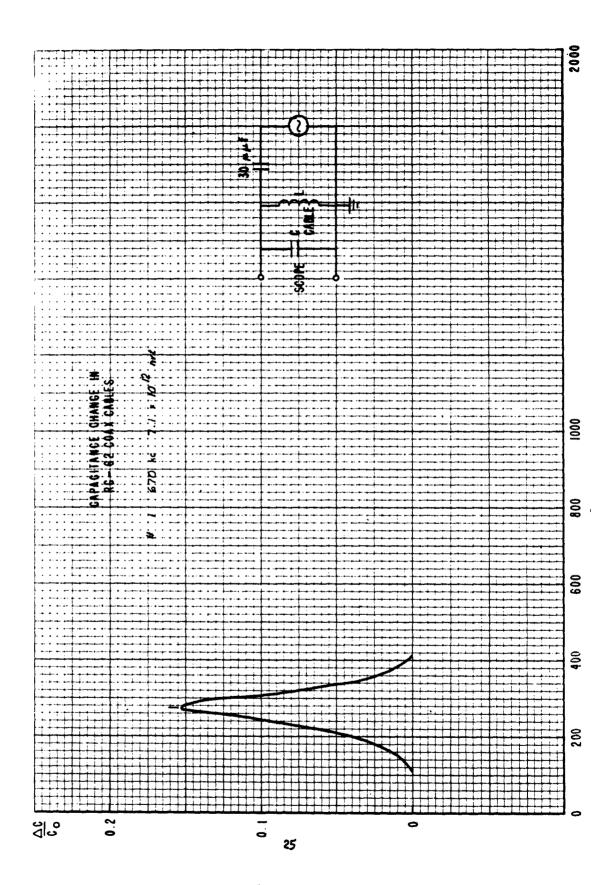


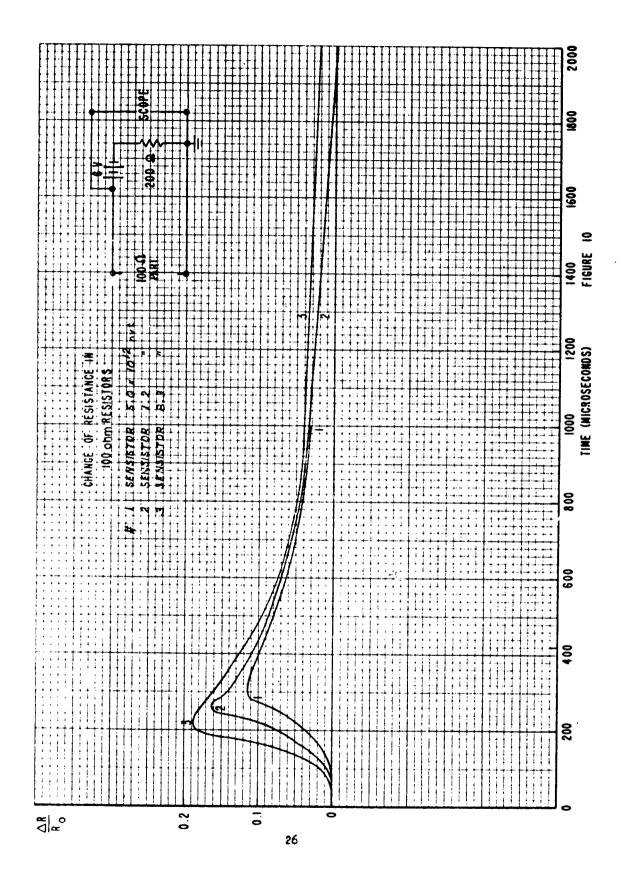


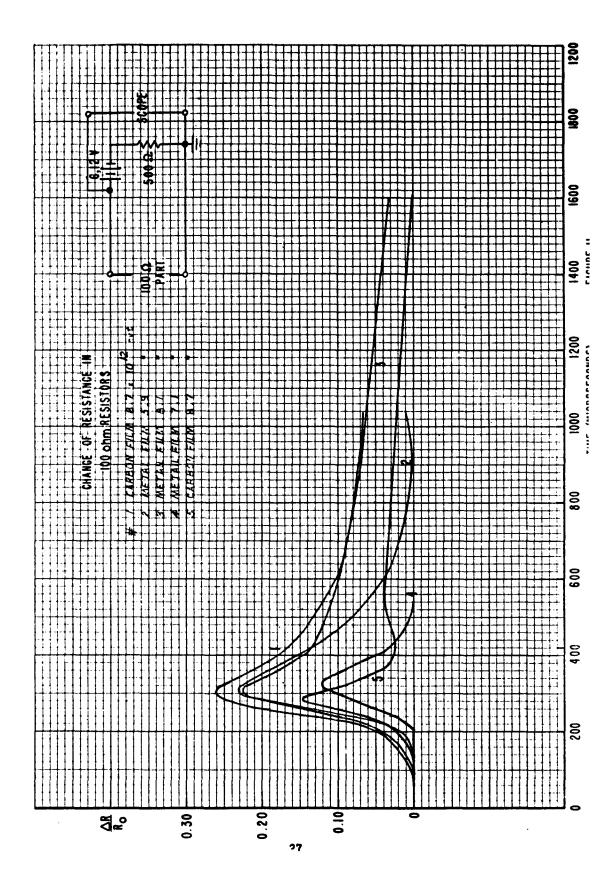


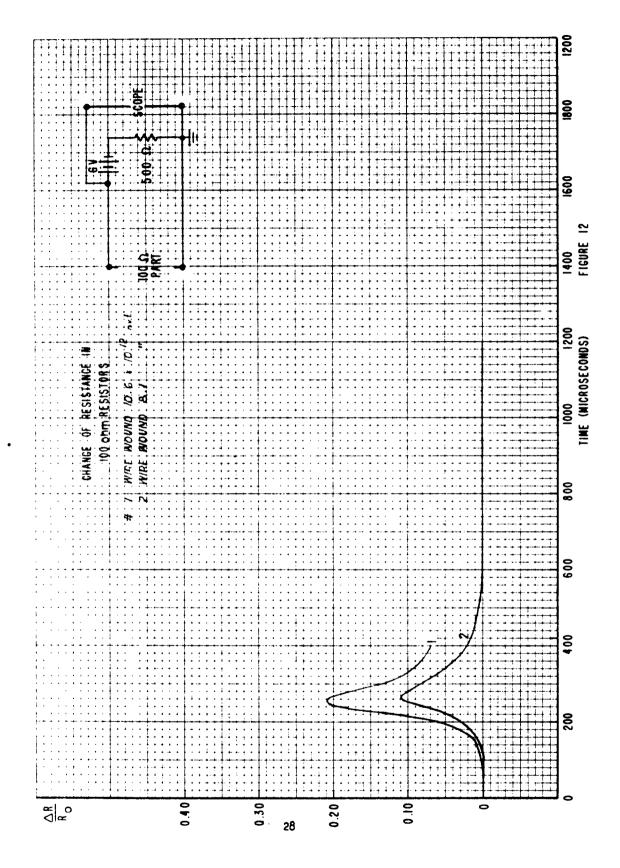


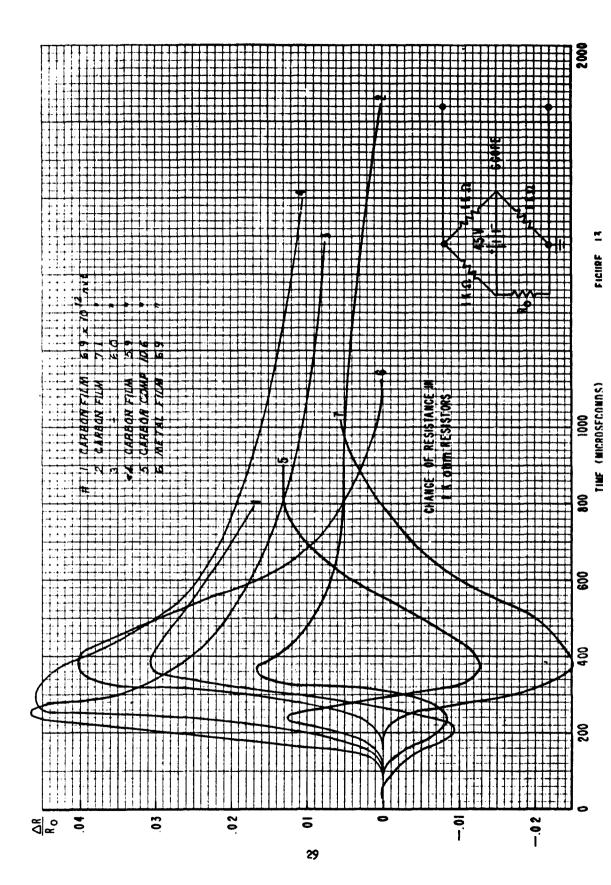


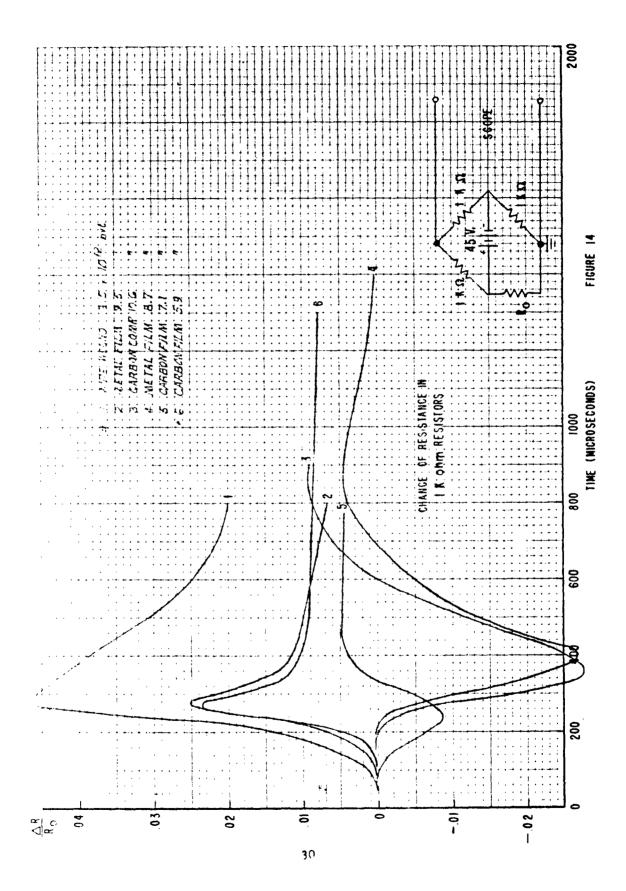


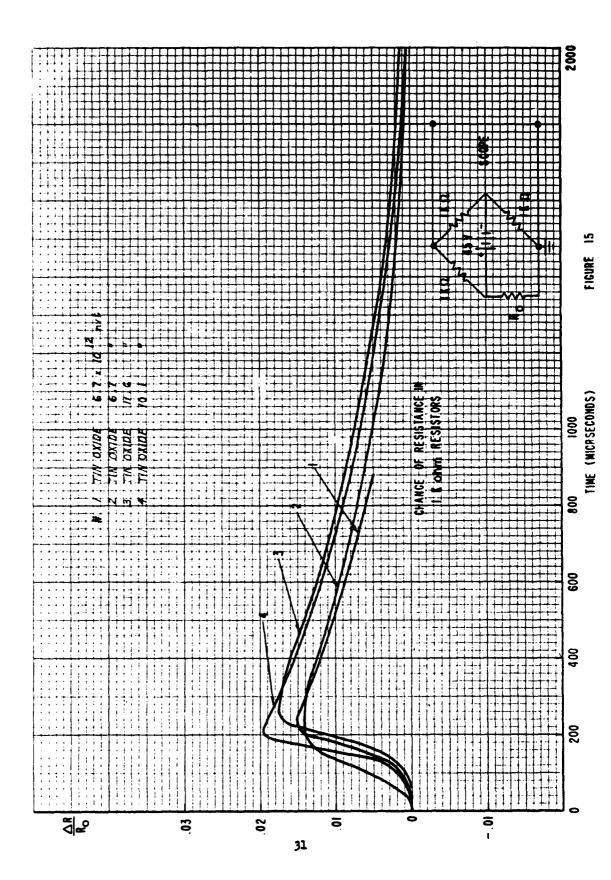


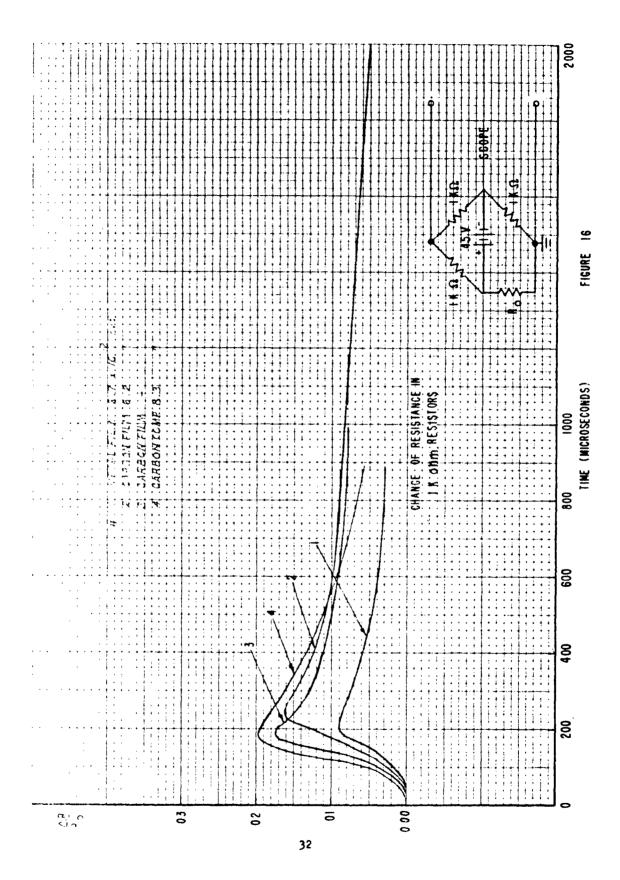


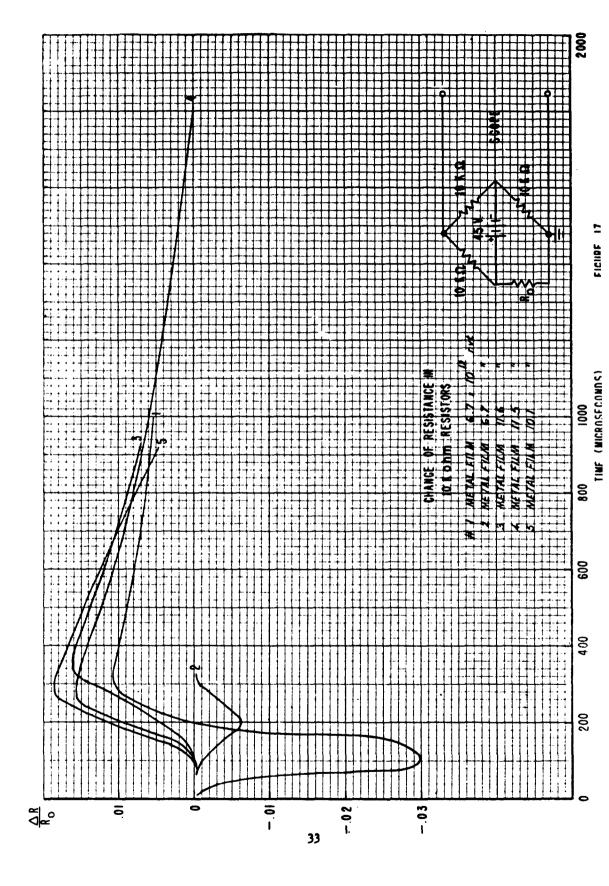


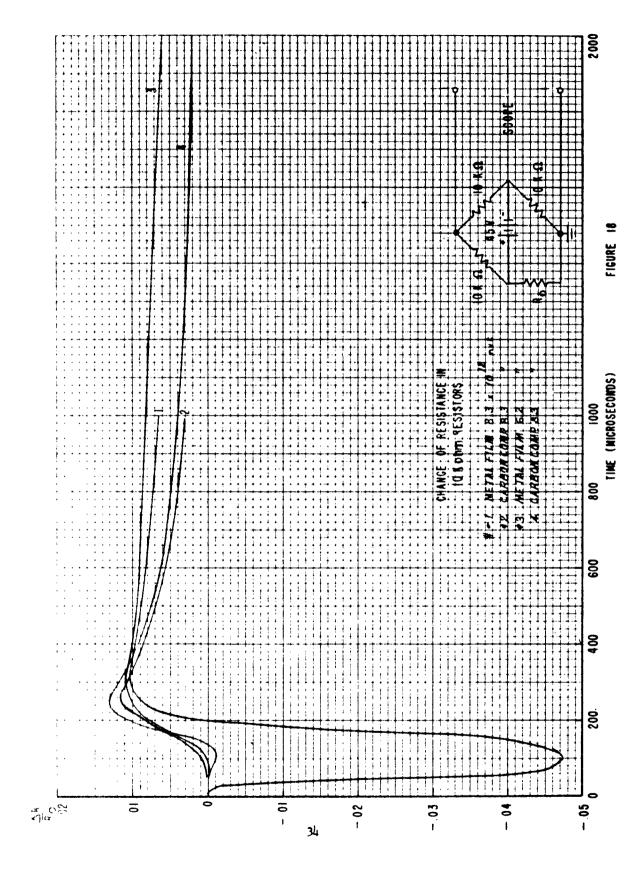


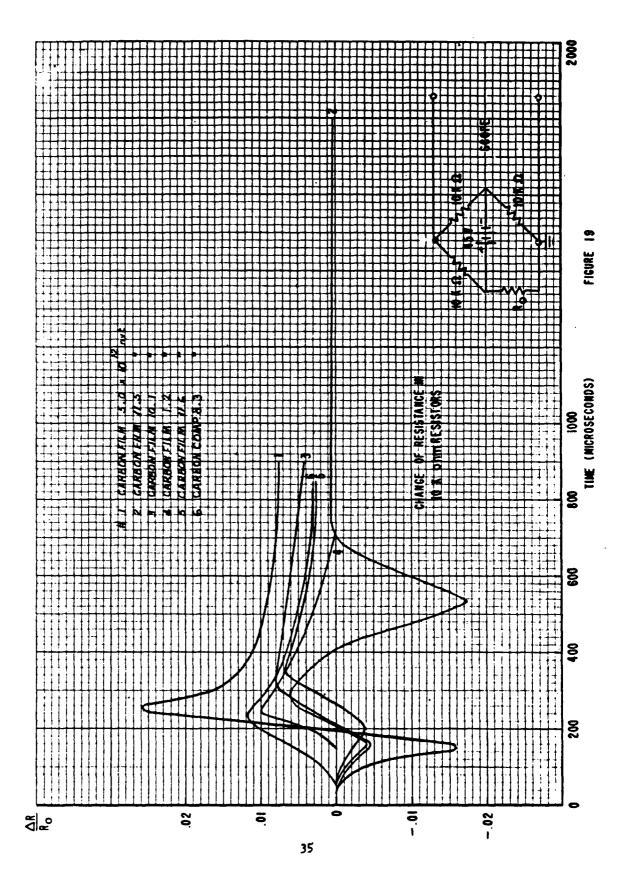


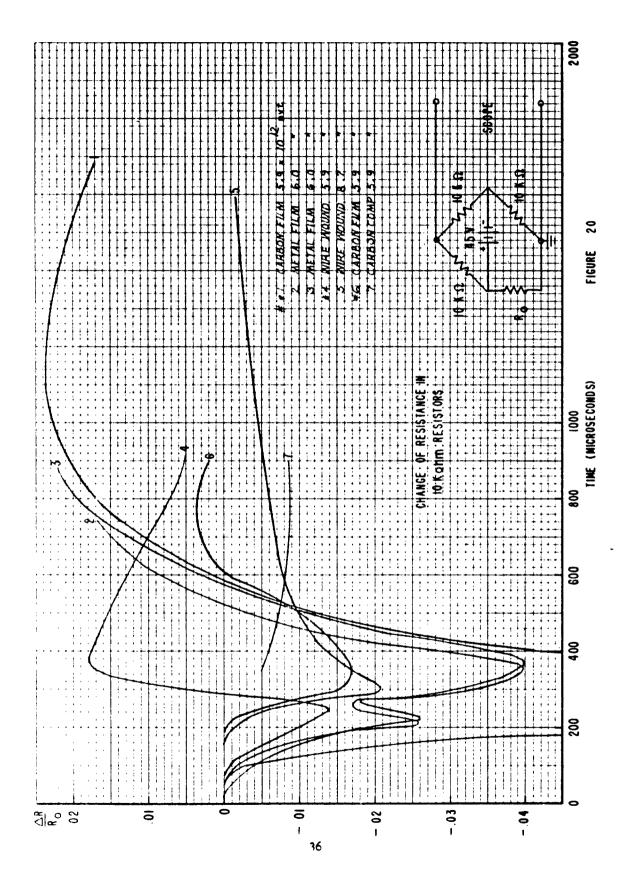


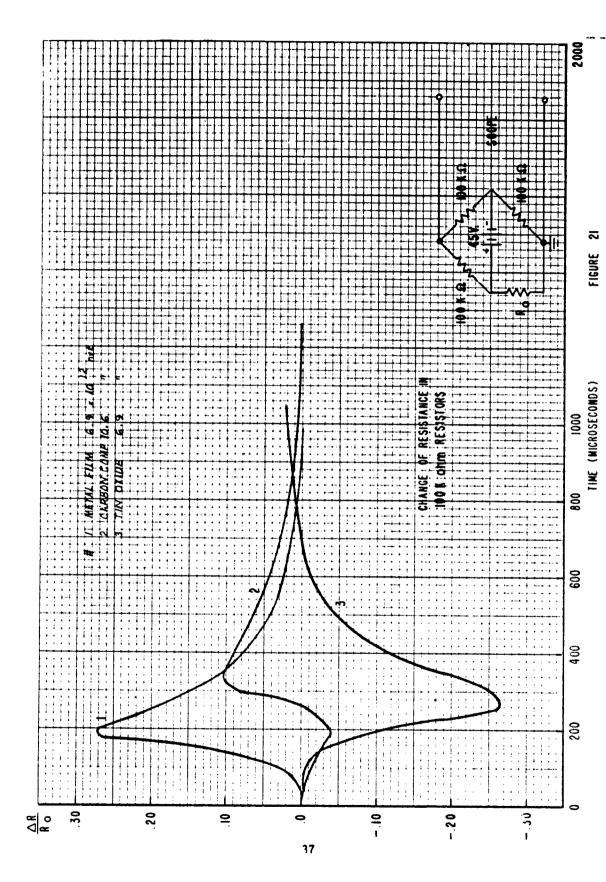


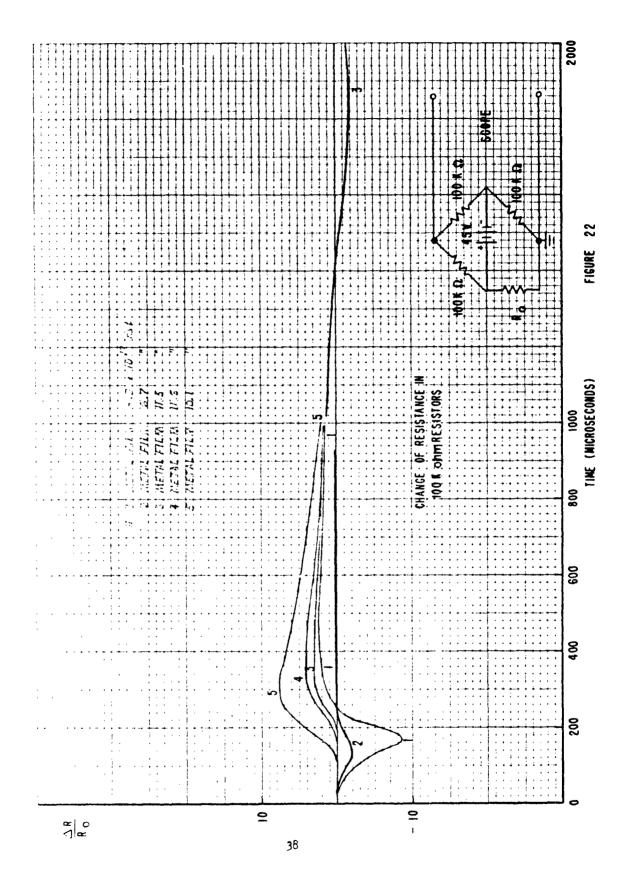


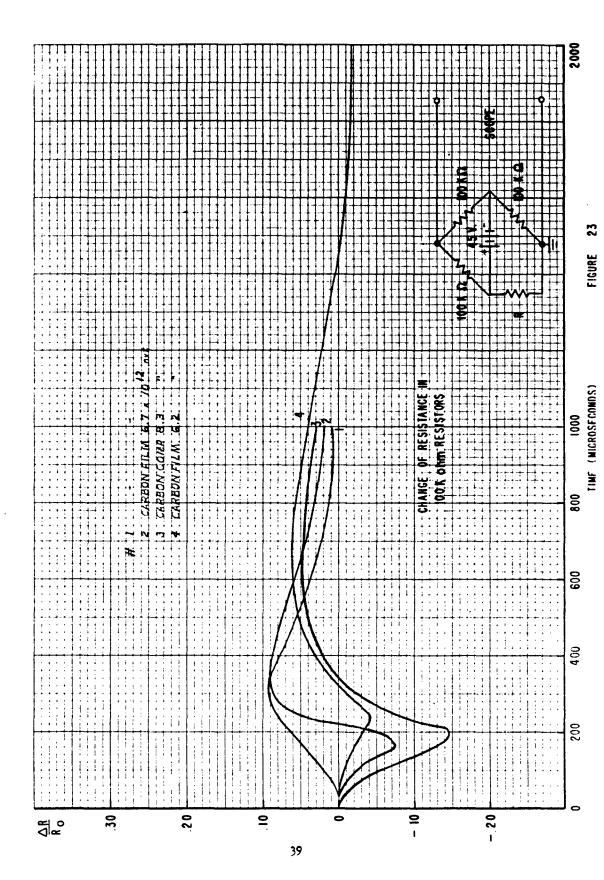


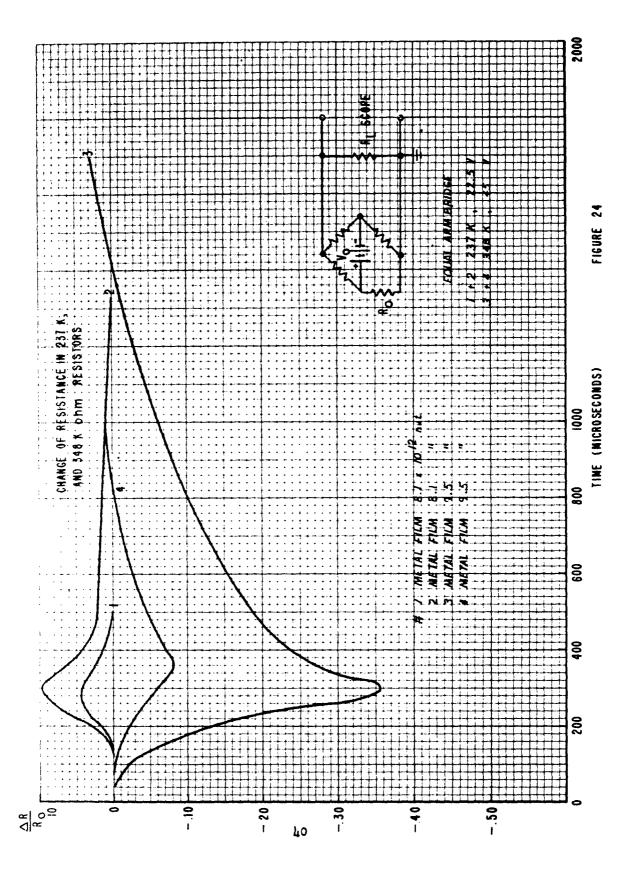


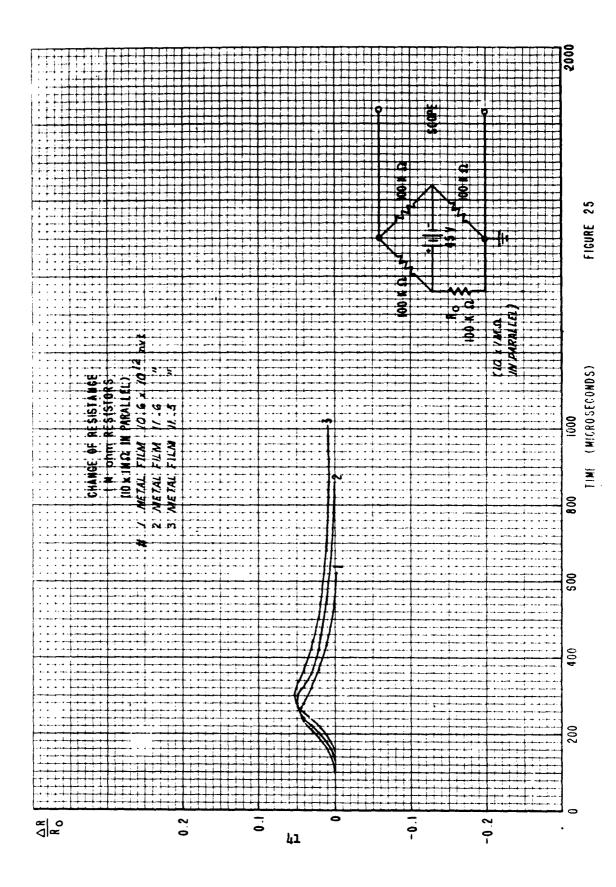


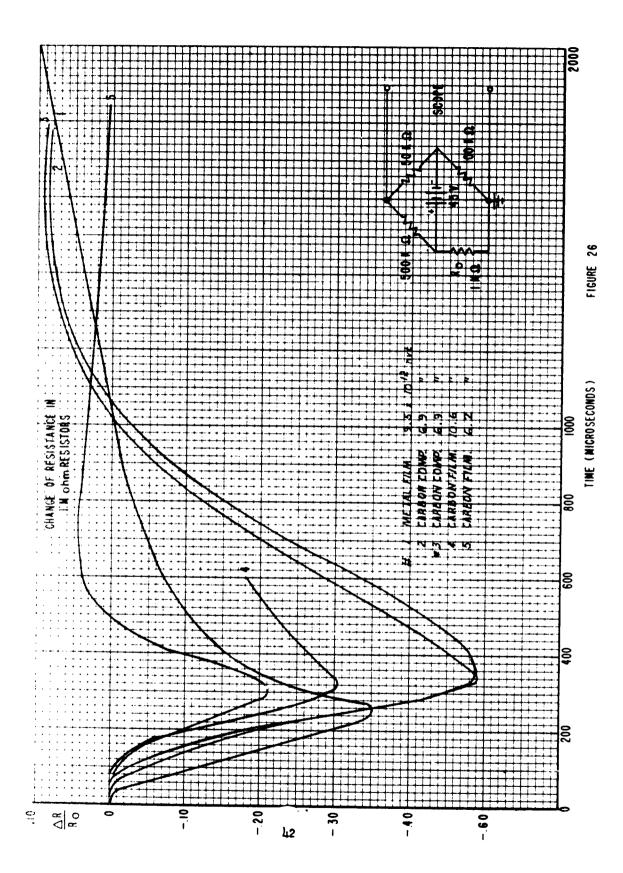


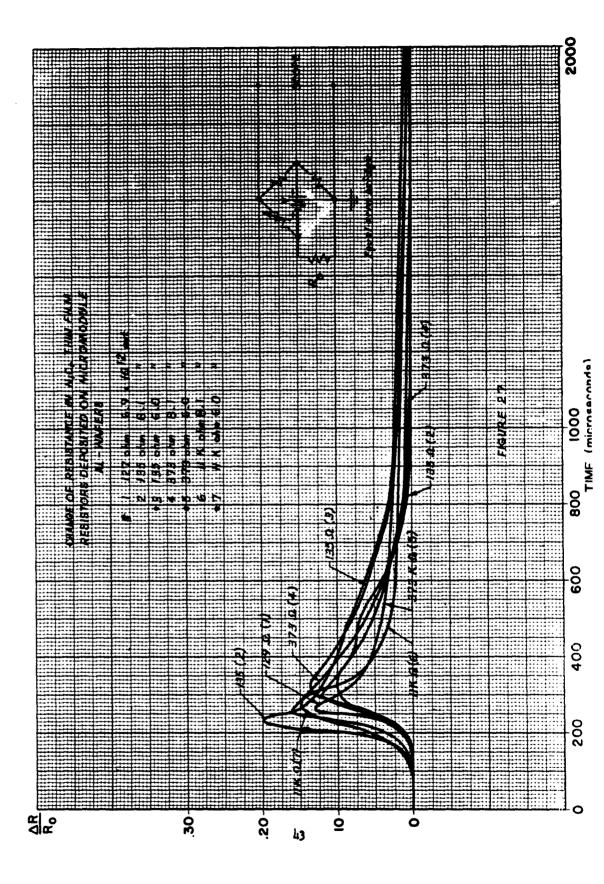


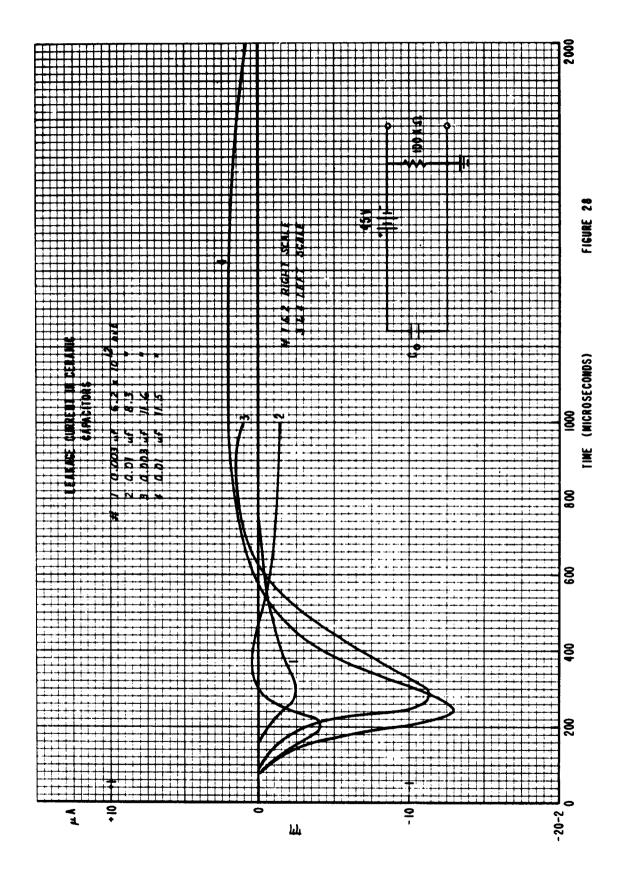


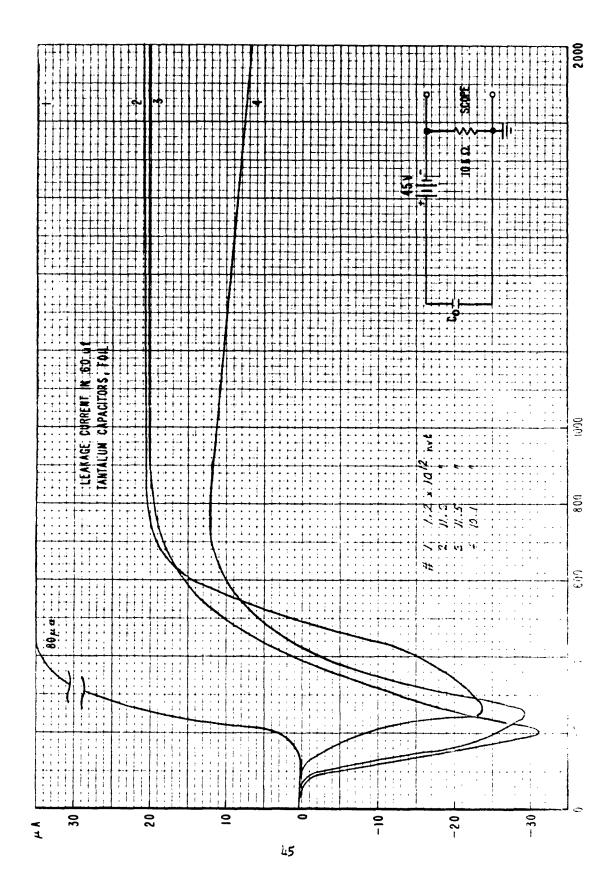


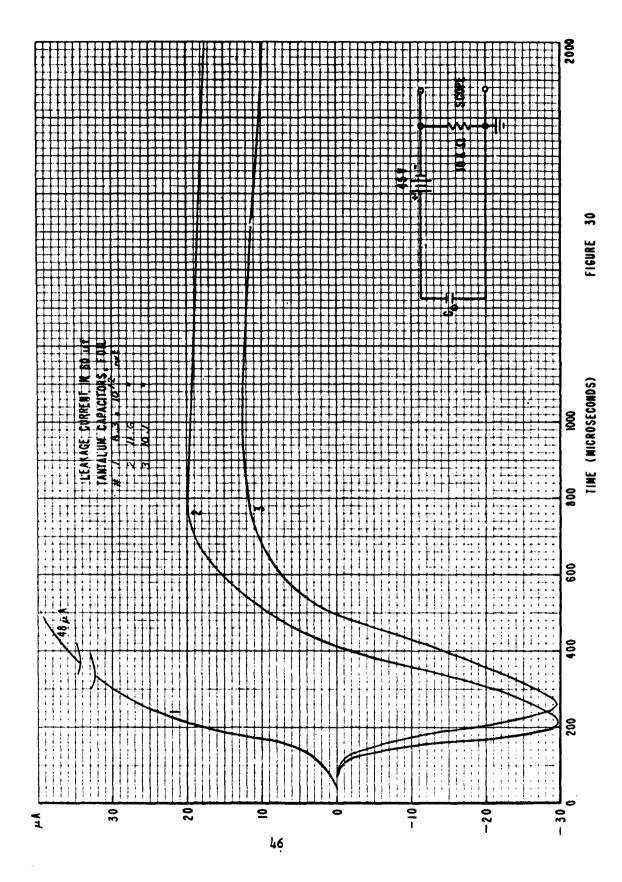


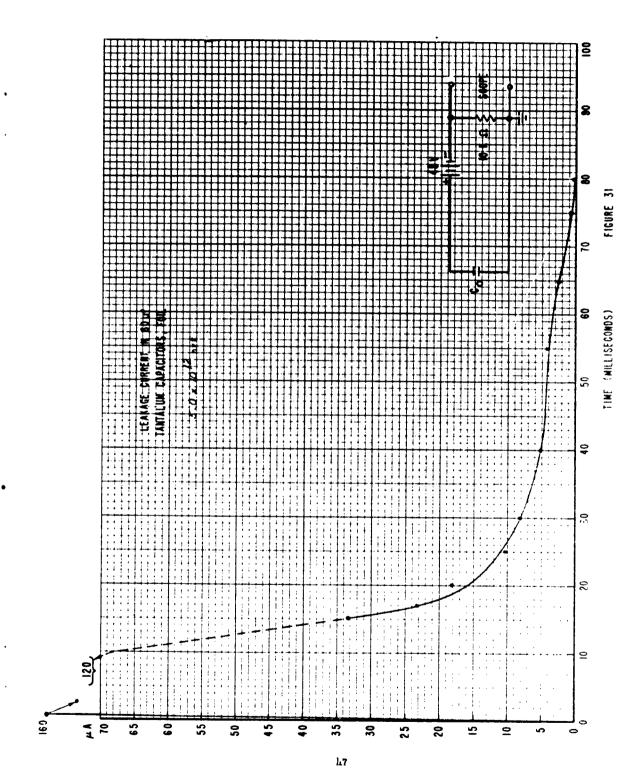


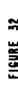


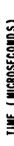


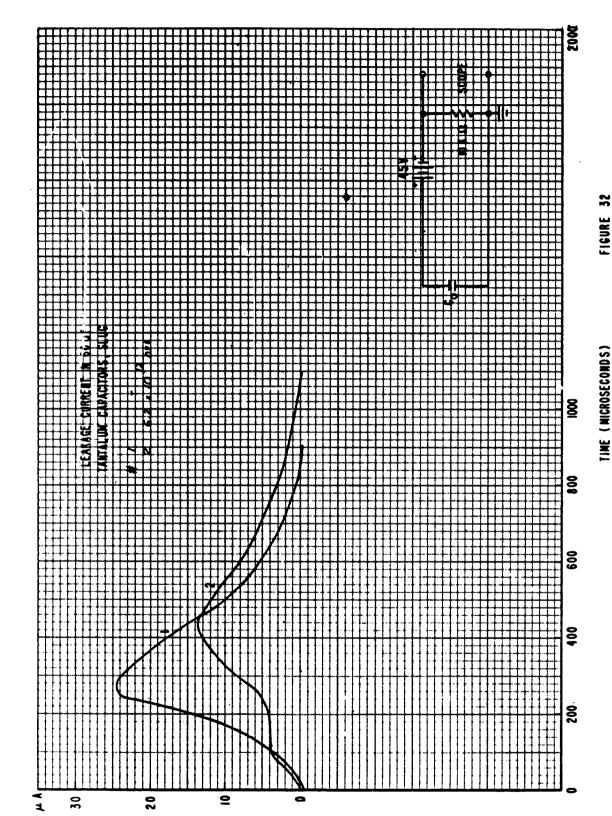


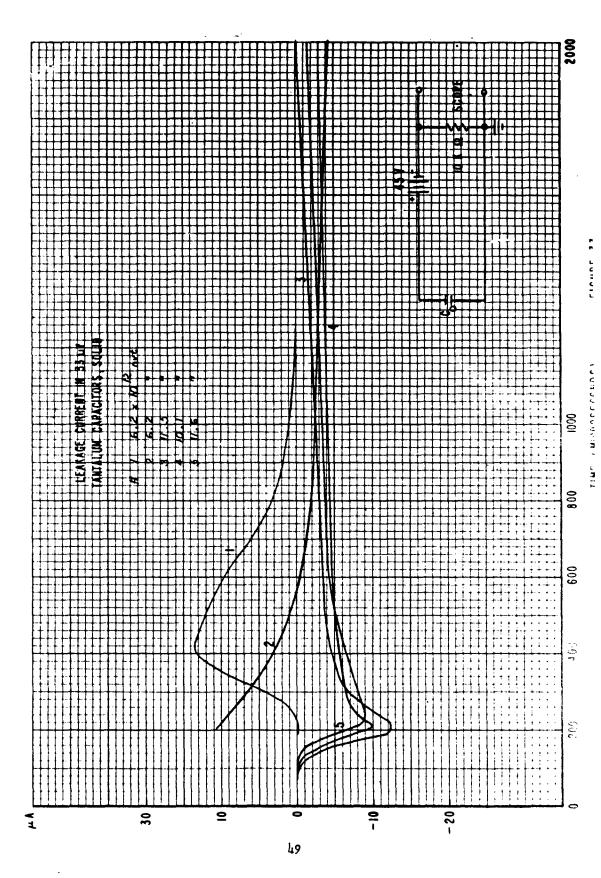


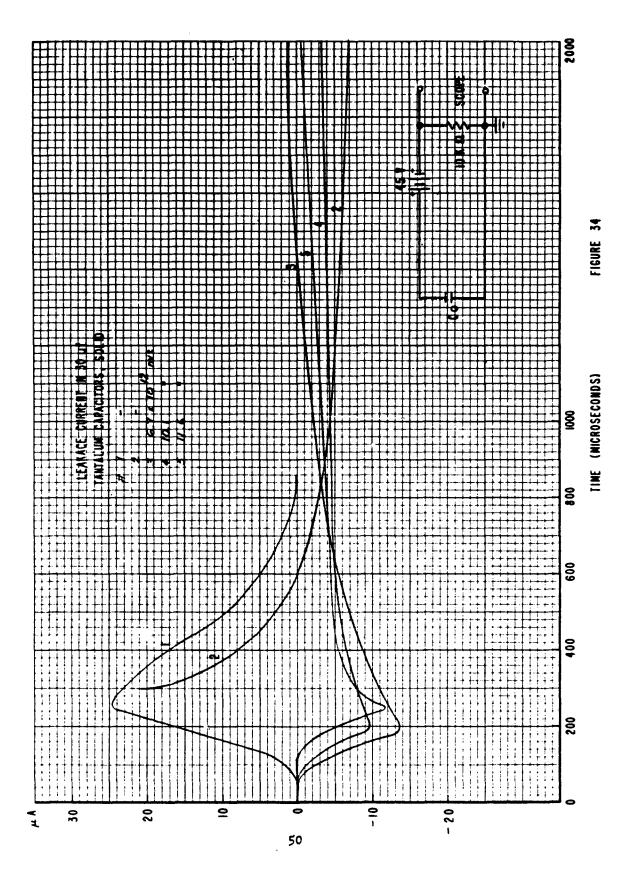


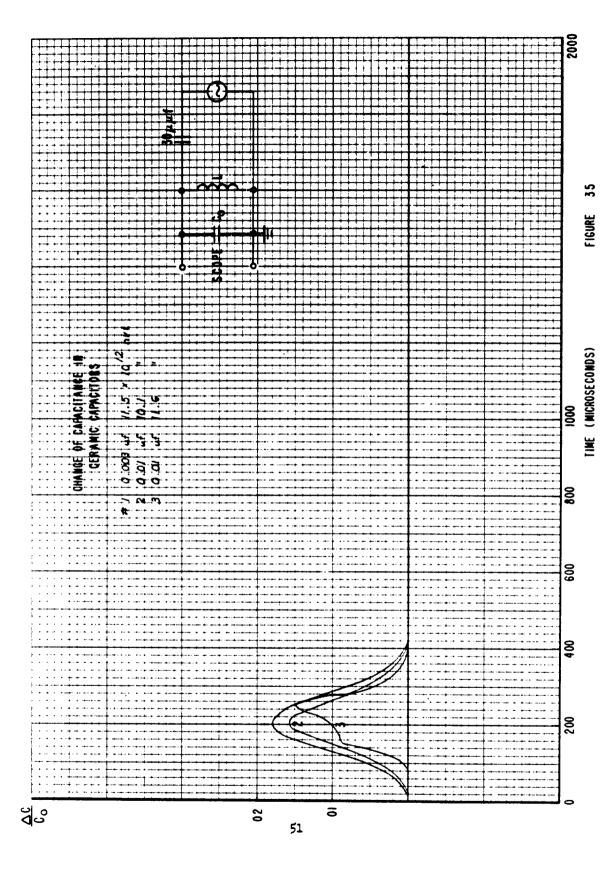


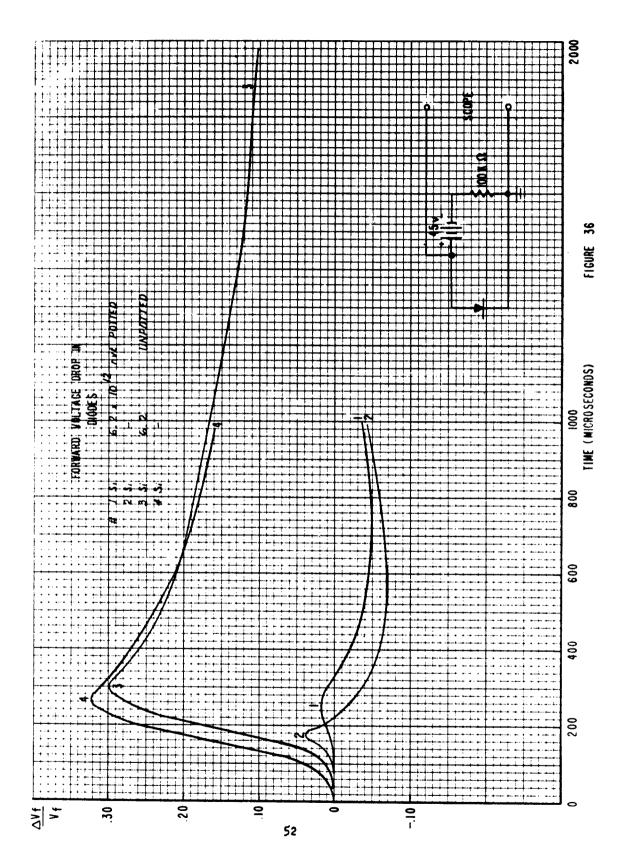


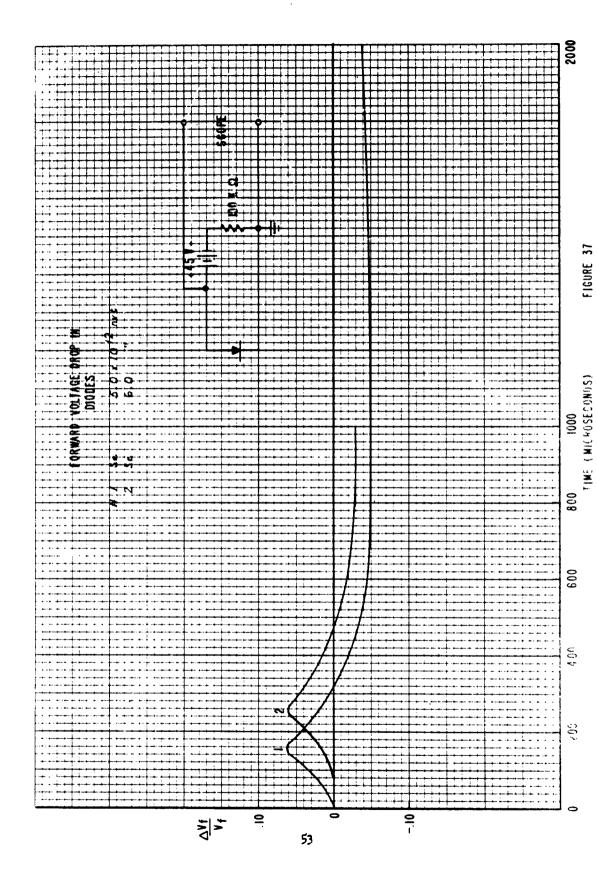


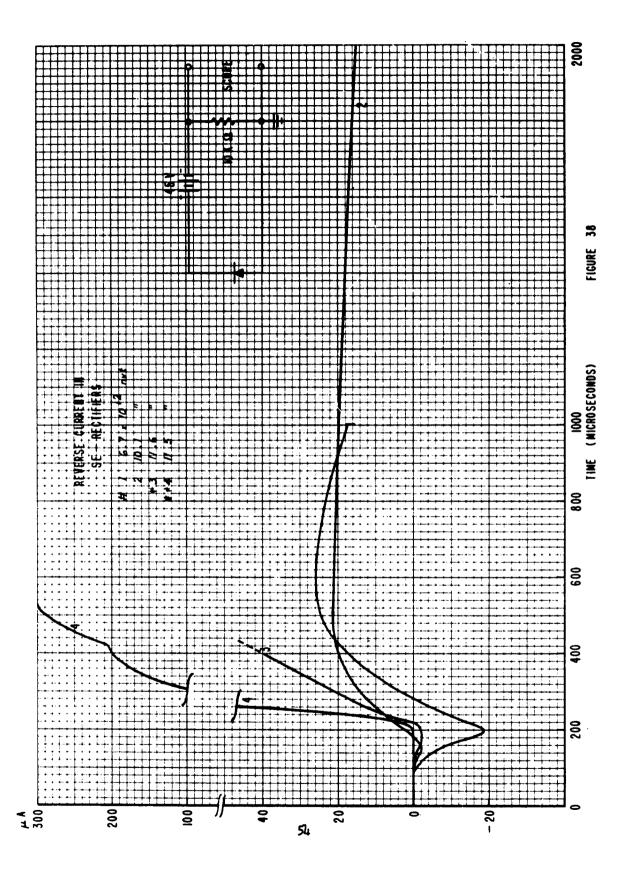


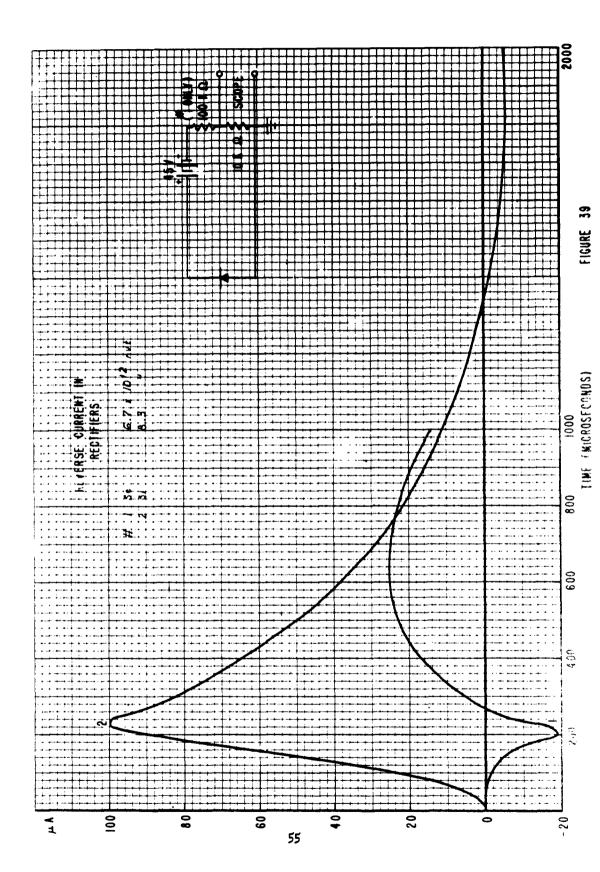


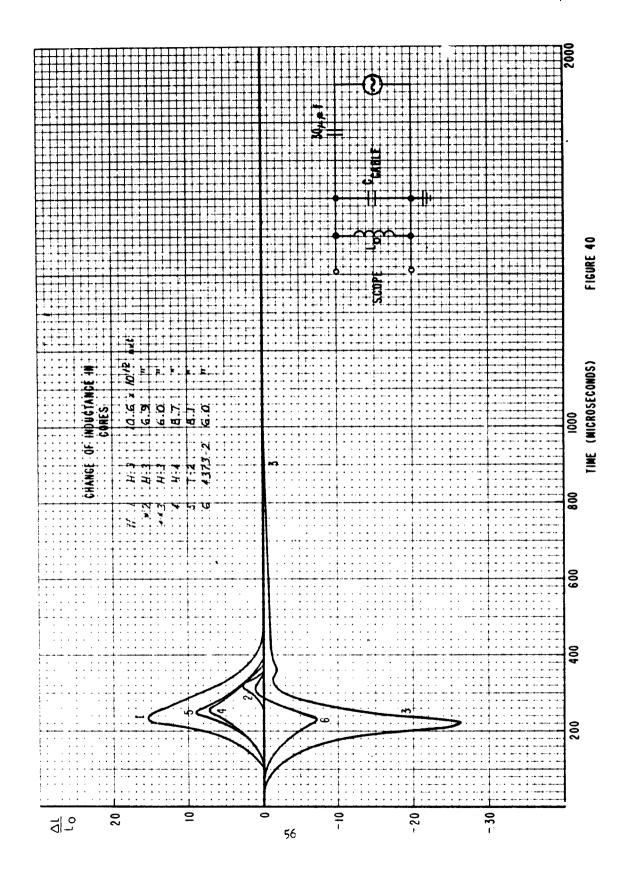












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